

Message Text

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SUBJECT: SOCIALIST REGIONAL CONGRESS, VENETO, JAN. 24-25, 1976

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1. SUMMARY: DELEGATES TO THE SECOND VENETO REGIONAL CONGRESS OF THE SOCIALIST PARTY K(PSI) SUPPORTED DE MARTINO POLICY OF SEEKING SOCIALIST ALTERNATIVE TO PAST CENTER LEFT GOVERNMENTAL FORMULA. PARTY UNITY, AUTONOMY AND FORMULATION OF CONCRETE PROGRAM FOR AN ALTERNATIVE RULING ALLIANCE TO INCLUDE MAJOR POLITICAL FORCES ON THE LEFT WERE MOST COMMON THEMES.

2. THE VENETO REGIONAL PSI CONGRESS TOOK PLACE IN VENICE JAN 24,25 IN PREPARATION FOR 40TH NATIONAL CONGRESS FEB 4-8. ATTENDANCE AVERAGED 250 AND INCLUDED REPRESENTATIVES WHO SPOKE FOR THE REGIONAL PCI, MUIS (UNITED MOVEMENT FOR SOCIALIST INITIATIVE), PSDI (SOCIALIST DEMOCRATIC PARTY OF ITALY), RADICAL PARTY AND TRADE UNION FEDERATIONS (CGIL AND UIL). PRINCIPAL PSI SPEAKERS WERE: BENITO PAVONI, PSI VENETO REGIONAL SECRETARY; GIANNI DE MICHELIS, CITY COUNCELLOR; LUIGI BERTOLDI, FORMER LABOR MINISTER; MARIO RIGO, VENICE MAYOR; BRUNO MARCHETTI, PRESIDENT OF REGIONAL COUNCIL.

3. MOST OF 32 SPEAKERS COMMENTED ON GROWING PARTY UNITY. OVERWHELMING APPROVAL OF DE MARTINO POLICY IN BRINGING DOWNFALL

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OF MORO/LA MALFA GOVERNMENT AND REJECTION OF PCI CRITICISM

FOR THIS ACT SEEMED MAIN BASES FOR CURRENT PARTY UNITY.

4. DEBATE ALSO CONTAINED COMMON THREAD REJECTION OF CENTER LEFT MODEL OF COOPERATION WITH DC FOR THE FUTURE.

ATTACK ON DC FAILINGS EQUALLY DIVIDED BETWEEN REGIONAL AND NATIONAL ISSUES, OFTEN APPEARED AS UNDISGUISED SELF CRITICISM. MARCHETTI, IN CLOSING SUMMARY, WARNED AGAINST MASOCHISTIC SELF DESTRUCTION AND PRESSED FOR A DRIVE TOWARDS GREATER AUTONOMY IN DEALING WITH DC.

5. DELEGATES ALSO TOOK AIM AT THE PCI FOR ITS FORMULATION OF "HISTORIC COMPROMISE" AS BETRAYAL OF UNIFIED SOCIALIST DOCTRINE, EMPHASIZING THAT EFFORTS AIMED AT SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC REFORMS HAVE BEEN THWARTED IN THE PAST BY DC INTRANSIGENCE.

6. COMMUNIST REGIONAL SECRETARY RINO SERRI JUSTIFIED TACTIC AS RECOGNITION OF THE CATHOLICS AS A MAJOR POLITICAL FORCE IN ITALY, WITH DEMOCRATIC FORCES OF WHICH PCI SOUGHT TO ALLY. THIS ARGUMENT DID NOT CARRY THE DAY WITH SOCIALIST DELEGATES. HOWEVER, HIS ENDORSEMENT OF UNITY AMONG THE LEFT FORCES PROMPTED NOT ONLY ONE OF THE RARE MOMENTS OF TOTAL AUDIENCE ATTENTION, BUT ALSO ENTHUSIASTIC SUPPORT. THE TWO OPTIONS OPEN TO THE PCI, ACCORDING TO SERRI, WERE TO REMAIN IN THE OPPOSITION OR TO PARTICIPATE DIRECTLY IN THE GOVERNMENT.

7. FOLLOWING THE MOTTO OF THE CONGRESS "IN UNITY FOR THE ALTERNATIVE",

PAVONI PAINTED PICTURE OF PSI AS LEADER IN THE FORMULATION OF A SOCIALIST BLOCK INCLUDING PSI, PCI AND LEFTISTS AMONG DC WHICH NO LONGER FEEL REPRESENTED BY DC LEADERSHIP. WHILE STRONGLY SUPPORTING THE CONCEPT, PAVONI AND OTHER COMMENTATORS LEFT THE IMPRESSION THAT THE FINAL DEFINITION AND FORMULATION WAS STILL DISTANT. TWO BASIC FACTIONS EMERGED: RIGO SPOKE OF AN AUTONOMOUS ROLE FOR THE PSI AS EQUAL PARTNER WITH THE PCI IN A NATIONAL RULING FACTION SOMETIME IN THE FUTURE; DE MICHELIS, HIS LOCAL OPPONENT, SUPPORTING THE LOMBARDI POSITION, CALLED FOR POLITICAL ALIGNMENT WITH THE PCI IN THE IMMEDIATE FUTURE.

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8. REACTING TO THE CRITICISM FROM BOTH THE DC AND THE PCI, SEVERAL PSI SPEAKERS INSISTED THAT A RESPONSIBLE FROLE FOR THE PCI IN A RULING COALITION WAS ESSENTIAL. THE EXPLICIT OBJECTIVE WAS TO BREAK THE PATTERN IN WHICH THE PCI WON SUPPORT FOR CRITICIZING THE FAILURES OF THE GOVERNMENT (AND IMPLICITLY OF THE PSI) AND ALSO PROFITED BY POSING AS THE POLITICAL FORCE THAT MADE POSSIBLE PASSAGE OF THE GOOD LAWS BY PARLIAMENT.

9. FREQUENTLY REPEATED VIEW WAS THAT EARLY PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS WERE NOT A POLITICAL GOAL FOR PSI. MOST DELEGATES SAID THAT MORO WAS GOING THROUGH RITUAL MACABRE DANCE THATW WOULD LEAD TO CALL FOR ELECTIONS IN 3-6 MONTHS. PSI SHOULD THEREFORE PREPARE FOR NATIONAL POLITICAL CAMPAIGN BASED ON BLAMING DC FOR UNFAVOUR-ABLE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL CONDITIONS.

10. THREE MILITANT WOMEN SPEAKERS, AMONG OTHERS, SUPPORTED REVISION OF ABORTION LAWS WITHOUT REFERENCE TO REFERENDUM. THEY ALSO DEALTH WITH BROAD ISSUES OF DISCRIMINATION IN EMPLOYMENT WHICH, THEY SAID, HAD BEEN EXASPERBATED BY CRITICAL STATE OF UNEMPLOYMENT AND UNDEREMPLOYMENT ESPECIALLY IN VENETO REGION.

11. ATTENTION GIVEN TO INTERNATIONAL SITUATION LIMITED TO OCCASIONAL SNIPE AT U.S. IMPERIALISM AND BLAME FOR CURRENT ECONOMIC CRISIS ON MULTINATIONALS. ASSUMED ROLE OF U.S. BANKS IN DEVALUATION OF LIRA SINGLED OUT AS EXAMPLE OF UNJUST AND PRECARIOUS CAPITALIST SYSTEM EXANT IN ITALY.

12. IN FINAL RESOLUTION REGIONAL CONGRESS ELECTED 61 DELEGATES TO NATIONAL PSI CONGRESS GIVING EQUAL REPRESENTATION TO MODERATE AND LEFT WINGS OF PARTY. DE MARTINO/BERTOLDI MODERATE POSITION HAD 24 DELEGATES, 7 FELL INTO MANCINI CAMP, 7 REPRESENTED NEN-

NI AUTONOMIST FACTION AND 23 WERE LEFT WING LOMBARDIANI.

13. IN CONCLUSION OUR IMPRESSION IS OF MORE UNIFIED SUPPORT FOR THE NATIONAL PSI LEADERSHIP WITH THE PRINCIPAL GOAL OF CREATING AN EVENTUAL NATIONAL GOVERNMENT BASED UPON THE ALLIANCE OF THE ITALIAN LEFT: PSI, PCI AND LEFT WING OF THE DC.FINA

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